

Meeting Executive
Portfolio Area Resources
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WORKFORCE STRATEGY 2020-2023

NON KEY DECISION

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To present to Executive and seek approval of the new Workforce Strategy for 2020-2023.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Workforce Strategy for 2020-2023, attached at Appendix A to this report, be approved.

- 2.2 That it be noted that the implementation plan may be revised due to changing circumstances and workforce requirements, and that approval for such changes be delegated to the Senior Human Resources Manager, after consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Workforce Strategy 2020 is a critical enabler for delivering the council's strategic ambitions over the next three years. It is through the Council's people that the Council will deliver the nine corporate priorities identified in the Future Town, Future Council plan.
- 3.2 As an enabling strategy, it is imperative that this strategy is aligned and supports other key council strategies and ambitions. This includes developing employee commercial skills and awareness, to support the Commercial and Insourcing Strategy and enabling staff to work out in the community aligned with the Co-operative Neighbourhood Management ambitions.
- 3.3 This Workforce Strategy identifies actions that will improve employees' work experience, support employee wellbeing and positions the Council as an "Employer of Choice". It has been developed as a working strategy with enough flexibility built in to allow the Council to adapt as new priorities emerge and/or the needs of the Stevenage community change. Actions will be regularly reviewed and implemented in line with the changing needs of the Council's residents and workforce.
- 3.4 The strategy recognises and is designed to support the diverse range of roles and services delivered by the Council and the importance of growing its own workforce through apprenticeship programmes.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 Reason for change

- 4.1.1 The Council has several reasons to publish a Workforce Strategy, firstly to ensure its workforce are equipped and enabled to deliver the council's priorities and ambitions.
- 4.1.2 Secondly, to respond to the changing world of work and how the Council serve its customers, in response to the global pandemic, both now and in the longer term.
- 4.1.3 Thirdly, and more long term, to consider emerging new ways of working which prepare for, and align with, the new public sector hub. This is in addition, to supporting the Council's approved priorities and initiatives such as: Co-operative Neighbourhood Management, the Commercial and Insourcing Strategy, the Council's Climate Change Agenda and Digital Transformation ambitions. The Council will need to develop its approach on the type of services and how the Council deliver them to meet the needs of its residents.

4.1.4 The Council requires a strategy for the development of its workforce that allows it to respond to these priorities and meet the needs of its residents.

4.2 **Key Element of the Strategy and outcomes**

4.2.1 There are five key strategic themes to the strategy which are:

1. **New ways of working** – The Council will develop and embed a model of work being a thing we do, rather than a place we go. Utilising technology to enable work to be delivered in the most appropriate location for the task, be that working from home, an office, or in the community, whilst also recognising the value of bringing people together for that shared sense of purpose.
2. **Attracting and retaining the best people** – The Council will continue to attract the most capable people to build an exceptional, diverse and culturally safe workplace. The Council's employee experience will be aligned to core values, vision and future organisational needs, and aspirations to deliver services in house wherever possible.
3. **Inclusion and Wellbeing** – The Council will be known for nurturing a progressive, inclusive, safe and healthy working environment. With inclusion being a broader ambition of creating a culture that embraces and values everyone's contributions and enables an engaged, creative and innovative workforce.
4. **Communication and Engagement** - Effective internal communication is central to developing trust, engagement and productivity across the workforce.
5. **Organisational Development** - Developing a culture of personal accountability and pride in delivering innovative and excellent customer service to Stevenage residents.

4.3 **What changes for staff need to be put in place?**

4.3.1 The Council needs to equip its workforce with both the technology and processes to enable them to work differently. The Council also need to redefine its service offer to harness the improved customer service offer that can be provided to residents as a result of greater flexibility in employee working arrangements.

4.4 **Consultation on the Strategy**

4.4.1 As part of the development of the Strategy consultation has taken place with members including via a Portfolio Holder Advisory Group meeting, SLT, and Trade Unions. Additionally feedback has been received from staff via pulse surveys. The feedback from the consultation is attached in Appendix B and summarised in table one below.

Table one Summary of Consultation Feedback	
Stakeholder Group	Feedback
PHAG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing employees that meet the needs of the Stevenage community is paramount. • Strategy needs to show benefits for the residents of Stevenage and the Council itself
SLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important that the strategy is the Strategic Leadership Team as a whole and not just the HR service. • The IT strategy will be a key enabling piece of work and it is important that these strategies work together.
Trade Unions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy is well timed to aid our transition to the public sector hub.

4.4.2. All of the groups consulted recognised the need for an emerging workforce strategy, to support the achievement of the Council’s strategic ambitions and ensure that the Council develop an appropriately skilled workforce to continue to deliver services to Stevenage residents now and in the future.

4.4.3 The key elements of the feedback are that generally there was a positive response to the strategy. It is recognised that as an emerging strategy not all potential costs and benefits are known at this stage. However, this will be kept under regular review to ensure there are benefits for employees and residents, and costs are kept under control. It is also recognised that technology is a key interdependency for this success of this strategy for both employees and residents, this feedback was consistent from all stakeholders.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

5.1.1 The new way the Council’s staff work will mean that the right ICT equipment and kit will need to be provided for staff, this may include laptops, mobile phones and tablets. Officers are currently assessing the level of cost, how this can be funded or phased. Officers are also assessing the likely savings from new ways of working that might offset any costs. Should a growth bid be required this will be included as part of the budget setting process.

5.2 Legal Implications

5.2.1 Legal advice will be sought, where appropriate in respect of any new employment policies/work programmes, incorporated in the Workforce Strategy.

5.3 Climate Change Implications

- 5.3.1 This strategy has been developed in line with the Council's climate change ambitions, recognising that developing the Council officer ways of working, supports this ambition. It is recognised that this may be a longer term aspiration, as the offset may be dependent upon us reducing the current office space occupied.

5.4 Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.4.1 Creating a culture of Inclusion across the Council's workforce is one of the key themes within the Workforce Strategy. Through the implementation plan, the Council will aspire to establish a culture of inclusivity and a truly diverse workforce that reflects the diverse community that it serves.

5.5 Information Technology Implications

- 5.5.1 New technology will be required to support the full implementation of some of the Council's strategic ambitions within the workforce strategy and other programmes of work. This will be reviewed and implemented in line with the IT strategy and existing governance structures and will complement the technology investments already made by the Council such as the Firmstep platform and Bartech (waste management system software).

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

BD1 LGA Workforce Outlook

APPENDICES

- A Workforce Strategy 2020-23
B Consultation Feedback Summary
C Workforce Strategy plan on a page